

Gov. Brown: Veto the teacher dismissal bill AB375

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During the very last days of the legislative session, a flawed measure dealing with teacher dismissal, [Assembly Bill 375](#), was pushed through the Legislature and sent to Gov. **Jerry Brown**. This bill is a classic case of good intentions to protect student safety gone awry - it should be vetoed by the governor, and accompanied by a strong message that it is time to go back to the drawing board and come up with some real solutions.

First, I want to be clear that I am proud of the incredible work being done by our teachers, principals, counselors and other staff, and know that the safety and education of our students is their highest priority. But it is a sad fact that I must occasionally recommend to our governing board that we dismiss an employee either for poor performance or, in extremely rare cases, for serious misconduct involving the children entrusted to our care.

When we are required to take such action, we need a teacher dismissal process that is fair and efficient, and correctly balances the rights of employees with the safety and educational needs of our students. Current law does not do this - it is a convoluted, costly and time-consuming process - but despite its claims to fix these problems, AB375 makes a bad process even worse.

For example, AB375 would restrict the ability of our district to gather evidence during the dismissal process, add procedural hurdles to the immediate suspensions of employees when serious misconduct with children is alleged, make it more difficult to amend charges if new information is uncovered during investigations, and create unworkable timelines for new processes and procedures while severely limiting the authority of the administrative law judge to alter those timelines when necessary. While I support the initial goal of the bill to streamline the procedure for teacher dismissal and make it more cost-effective, the technical flaws in the bill produce the opposite result.

For this reason, I am not aware of any district superintendent or human resources director who supports AB375.

While I oppose AB375, I fully agree that the teacher discipline and dismissal process should be reworked. We need a fair and efficient process that focuses on the safety and educational needs of our students while protecting the rights of our employees. Along with my colleagues I stand ready to work with the Legislature, parents, organizations representing teachers, and other interested parties to implement meaningful reforms to the dismissal process. The children in our schools deserve no less, and I respectfully ask Gov. Brown to give us that opportunity by vetoing Assembly Bill 375.

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